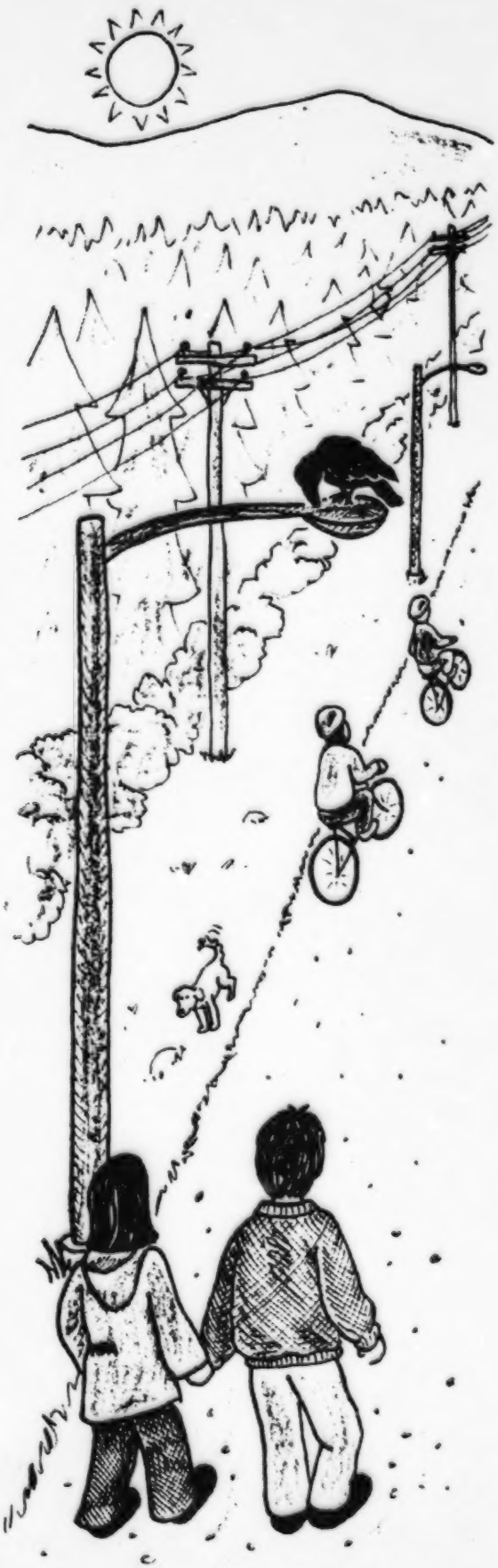

REPORT ON COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Cabinet Commission on Energy

June 1998

Yukon

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2. Introduction

The Report on Public Consultation summarizes the findings and discussion of the individuals, First Nations and municipalities who attended meetings convened by the Cabinet Commission on Energy. The meetings constituted a "communities tour" and were held over April and May, 1998. The community tour was one part of a three-part consultation process undertaken by the Commission to inform and obtain comments on its findings to date. As well, the Commission worked on a more technical level with participants in the Energy Policy Working Meetings and distributed a comprehensive survey to all Yukon households on key energy issues. A detailed report for each part of the consultation process was prepared, together with an overview of the findings of all three processes.

The purpose of this report is simply to present the comments and concerns raised, on a community-by-community basis. Comments have been included in this report as much as possible to highlight points made.

All but two Yukon communities were visited; time and scheduling challenges did not allow for formal consultation with Pelly Crossing or Ross River, but contact was made with individuals in each community and their comments noted. As part of the consultation meeting, participants were invited to try an interactive display (including an electricity-generating bicycle). The display fostered a high level of participation and helped popularize the complex subject of energy policy.

The goal of the Cabinet Commission on Energy is to make recommendations to government for the development of a comprehensive energy policy for the Yukon. In the community consultations, Commission staff sought comment and direction on Green Power, Community Energy Management (CEM), rate stabilization, rate relief, risk management, energy supply options and energy conservation. While not every community made in-depth comments on all subject areas, almost all commented on CEM, Green Power and rate stabilization.

The Cabinet Commission on Energy will submit a report of recommendations to Cabinet in the Summer of 1998

3. Carcross

The community meeting was held on April 2, 1998 and included representatives from the Carcross Tagish First Nation

3.1 Community Energy Management

The community and the First Nation were clear that they want more involvement with local area planning so they could look at the community's energy management needs. There is interest in pursuing district governance involving the entire community and actually taking control of the community's energy infrastructure. One CEM initiative the First Nation is interested in looking at is more efficient transportation links between Carcross and Whitehorse. It was suggested that a study be done to look at making use of trains using the available track. Carpooling is not convenient. To improve energy efficiency and production the community may want to develop a micro hydro facility in Carcross (a plan to study this is in the works).

3.2 Green Power Fund

The community agreed the Green Power Fund is a good idea in theory, but because of questions of accountability a Green Power Fund should not be created. There was no faith that government would manage the fund and ensure that moneys would never be used for other government priorities. However, if fund management questions could be resolved, there were some individuals who would contribute a monthly fee but it must be voluntary. If a fund were established, moneys must not be redirected from the rate relief program.

Some people felt that if green power were the right thing to have happen, then it would happen naturally. People will use the lowest priced energy and if the real cost of energy is known perhaps Green Power will become competitive in price.

First Nation representatives agreed that looking at Green Power was consistent with their own long term planning, and with the CTFN's goal of self-sufficiency. Another participant felt that "affordability now comes before planning for the future."

3.3 Rate Stabilization

All participants believed that the current RSF plan does not address long term price fluctuations. Right now a RSF seems to be the only way to get stability in the system but what happens if there is not enough money after one year or two years to pay for the fund? However it was also agreed that if there is going to be a fund, everybody, with the exception of industrial customers should benefit from it. The group was not convinced that other options, with respect to stabilizing rates, had been considered, or presented. It was also felt that consumers should know what the true cost of their power is and it should not be hidden.

⇒ *"Have we looked at what makes the most economic sense overall, is artificial stabilization of electricity rates really what's best. What are the other options?"*

3.4 Rate Relief

There was no agreement on rate relief options. Some believed that Government should continue to pay rate relief to residential electricity customers and that rate relief does not encourage people to use more power. Others felt strongly that residential customers should pay the full cost of the power they use. That way they would know exactly what the power costs. Then a lot of the other energy issues would be clearer and there would be an incentive for conservation.

As for targeting rate relief, there was agreement that proving and determining the need for financial assistance could be a problem. Those in need should have assistance to pay their bills but the question really should be, how do we best do it? This issue is bigger than just a power issue; it is a social welfare question, which the government should look at generally.

3.5 Risk Management

The community agreed that Government should not pay for new electrical facilities to service new industrial customers because it hasn't worked in the past. It has only promoted short-term economic development and has usually left Yukoners paying higher costs for infrastructure that they didn't ask for and that is no longer needed. Industry should be encouraged to supply their own power in the future.

Forming multi-stakeholder financial partnerships could be established to share the risk. Having financial investment by individuals, communities and First Nations and carrying out community based planning, brings the risk home to people. The risk may be managed better because it is closer to home.

Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and communities/First Nations should be the new power suppliers. This would keep the capacity increase incremental, affordable and manageable.

4. Dawson City

The community meeting was held on April 6, 1998 and included representatives from the Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation and the Dawson City Town Council.

4.1 Community Energy Management

Most people agreed that Dawson winter homes are already energy efficient, they have to be energy efficient because of Dawson's extremely cold winter temperatures. Some of the public buildings (built by the government) aren't quite as efficient as the private homes.

There was no argument that CEM is a good idea and Dawson, with their recycled waste heat from the diesel plant, is quite proud that it is already practicing CEM principles. Yet there seems to be a lack of planning around waste heat in the Yukon. This could be improved and there may be more opportunities in Dawson to use waste heat (over and above the waste heat that *is* being used.)

There was agreement that carpooling was a non-starter on skidoos and four wheelers, a popular mode of transport in this community. A public bus was tried in Dawson, but it did not get many riders. It was not convenient enough. One successful public transportation improvement is the Dawson- Whitehorse taxi. People take it because it is cheaper than the bus.

4.2 Green Power Fund

Generally there was agreement that a Green Power Fund is a good idea. But there was concern about accountability. How would the fund be managed and could the party managing the money be trusted? Only if there were strict guidelines for fund management would people in Dawson be willing to pay into it. It was also desirable that all the money collected stays in the Yukon and goes towards local initiatives. Participants were willing to pay extra on their monthly power bill to get electricity from a green source as opposed to diesel generated power. People felt that contribution to a GPF should be mandatory, otherwise, not enough money will be collected to make the fund viable. A Yukon-wide Green Power Fund would be more feasible than a community-based fund because everyone would benefit from the economies of scale.

There was also consensus that funds should not be redirected from the rate relief program to a Green Power Fund. Participants thought that perhaps the government should contribute to green power by connecting Dawson to the Mayo hydro facility, or perhaps the North Forks facility should be resurrected. There needs to be more research done and a public discussion on this option.

4.3 Rate Stabilization

Participants in Dawson felt that a Rate Stabilization Fund is a good idea, a Rate Stabilization Fund helps the economy. No one would accept a double-digit rate increase and the RSF is a good way to address this situation. The Rate Stabilization Fund should benefit residential and business customers. People said that there were some businesses in town who could not afford to stay open in the winter if their rates were to increase 16%

Although no one felt that residential electrical customers should pay the full cost of their power they should see the full cost on their bills. This would help to educate the consumer about the need to conserve energy.

There was some disagreement as to where rate relief should go. Some felt that Government should continue to pay rate relief to residential electricity customers, even with an RSF, and others felt that all customers should be treated equally and share any subsidies regardless of customer class or usage. Yet with the idea of targeted relief:

⇒ *"Anything that is targeted at those in financial need should come from a social program, not a utilities' initiative. "*

4.4 Risk Management

The group agreed that notwithstanding environmental considerations, diesel is still the best option to manage risk. Government should not pay for new electrical facilities to service new industrial customers.

4.5 Supply Options Planning

Because of the volatility of the Faro mine our rates are unstable and often too high. Therefore, in the future, Communities and major electricity consumers should be able to participate in supply planning together with project proponents. And in order for the process to work, everyone will need to be well informed on the issues.

Some would like to explore the option of developing the North Forks hydro facility and the feasibility of building the grid between Mayo and Dawson. There is a possibility of looking at a joint venture with YEC and the First Nation on North Forks hydro development.

4.6 Energy Conservation

Everyone wanted to see more emphasis on energy conservation and felt that the government or the utility should offer financial incentives, loans or subsidy programs to help consumers use power more efficiently. Low interest loans are a good idea.

With respect to Demand Side Management initiatives, it was agreed that perhaps a big push of energy information every five or ten years would suffice.

⇒ *"The last program (Power Smart) was long enough. I don't believe the Power Smart program caused any change. I didn't buy one damn light bulb or put in a low flow showerhead..."*

5. Old Crow

The community meeting was held on April 7, 1998 and included representatives from the Vuntut Gwitch'in First Nation

5.1 Community Energy Management

The priority for Old Crow is starting the land use plan (LUP) immediately for its traditional areas. The LUP must be completed before work on other issues begins. Planning and working together would help in many cases. For example, if the government and Yukon Electric (YECL) had planned and worked together, YECL could have saved money by trucking the fuel into Old Crow on the winter road, rather than flying it in before the road was made.

The Community is working on a community management plan and is considering energy and future uses and supply in Old Crow. They would like to work with YEC on energy planning for the community.

5.2 Green Power Fund

Representations from both the First Nation and the community agreed green power is a good idea, but the money should come from general revenues, not from higher rates or fees. Because of lobbying against oil development within their traditional area, finding alternative energy generation is timely. One suggestion was to use sawdust from the mill and capture waste heat from the school's heat generation system; this would be supported as a CEM and Green Power initiative. The community would like to look further at the option of wind generated energy. There has been some research done but not enough. The chief and council would also like to see solar power as an option for at least part of the year. Generally the community was interested in the idea of a green power fund, and exploring further green power initiatives in Old Crow. They are interested to learn about the feasibility of green power in Old Crow.

5.3 Rate Stabilization

Participants agreed that rate stabilization is a good idea. A 16% rate increase would have negative impact on household finances in the community. The RSF should apply to residential consumers and commercial users and government should subsidize residential consumers. Therefore, it was recommended that the cost of service be left as it is now; 76% of cost for residential, 110% of cost for General services, and 143% of cost for government. Rate relief -- if it is continued with the RSF -- should be applied to all residential consumers.

The main message from these meetings was that government had to get involved to keep rates low and stable for residential users. If that means continuing rate relief with a RSF then so be it. Old Crow should not have to pay for increases in energy costs that have been incurred elsewhere in the Yukon.

5.4 Risk Management

As with many other communities, there was general frustration that Faro mine owners were allowed to run up a sizable bill, and then not pay it. It was repeated often that other customers should not have to pay for the government bailing out Faro - especially since most Yukoners do not reap the benefits of the mine.

5.5 Supply Options Planning

Participants stated clearly that they want to be involved in any supply options planning that would impact their community or their traditional area. There should not be environmentally harmful energy developments in protected areas, specifically in the Old Crow area. Wind power and other alternatives should be considered for powering Old Crow.

First Nations are very interested in taking over responsibility for their own power or producing it as an Independent Power Producer.

5.6 Energy Conservation

It was agreed that converting to more energy efficient heating sources is a good idea. For example, district heating with the local wood supply could create local jobs and maintain a more traditional way of heating. The Community Development Fund could be used to fund this kind of venture.

⇒ *"Energy efficient site and building design sounds good, but let's find out how much it will cost and assess the success of it in other areas where it has been done, before trying it in Old Crow."*

There needs to be more information about the kind of efficiency programs which are available. Yukon Housing should come to Old Crow and talk about the programs they offer or suggestions they have to make homes more energy efficient. There may be heat recovery options in Old Crow homes. For example, heating coils connected to the wood stove could be used instead of electrical heat tape to keep plumbing from freezing. People in Old Crow don't get to see new technology (for example, new energy efficiency technology) so they don't know what is available.

It was worth noting that although the community agrees that efficient vehicles are a good idea, Old Crow should be exempt from any vehicle fuel efficiency regulations, because it would cost way to much for Old Crow residents to get their vehicles upgraded (no local garages or specialized tools).

5.7 General

There was one individual who suggested that YEC and YECL should merge, to eliminate the duplicate cost of managing two companies. And finally, it was felt that there should be more participation on the part of locals in any decision that affects them.

6. Watson Lake

The Mayor and Councilors of the Town of Watson Lake met with the consultation team on April 8, 1998.

6.1 Community Energy Management

The town of Watson Lake is familiar with some of the CEM concepts but nothing has been done to implementing them.

6.2 Green Power Fund

It is essential to have a Green Power fund which will focus on renewable energy sources. There is concern about how the fund will be managed; there is always a risk that it will become too bureaucratic and top heavy. If there is a way to guarantee against that happening, then it's a timely idea. It is time to start weaning our communities off diesel.

6.3 Rate Stabilization

No one wants to see a nine per cent rate increase, as currently proposed by the Cabinet Commission on Energy, but the alternative 30 per cent increase is even more unacceptable:

⇒ *"[Nine per cent is] the best of some lousy alternatives, so go ahead. If there is a fund it should necessarily apply to the commercial customers, as they will have to absorb the increase somehow. Using the Yukon Development Corporation as a source of money for the fund, sounds dangerous."*

As for Rate Relief there shouldn't be a heavy subsidy to consumers, but any relief in addition to the RSF should be distributed equally. No targeted relief.

6.4 Supply Options Planning

Watson Lake is very interested in further exploring some of the coal deposits, which are in the area. They believe that to have cleaner air emissions from a coal fired plant a larger investment would have to be made, but there is interest in exploring this option. Although it is still a new idea, the potential of tapping into the Kotanelee gas fields with a feeder line may be possible in 10-15 years.

7. Mayo

The community meeting was held on April 15, 1998 and included representatives of the Village Council.

7.1 Community Energy Management

The community was very interested in CEM and was immediately inspired to think of ways to improve energy efficiency and energy production in Mayo. For example, people should first build on the vacant lots in town before building on the edge of town. This could allow for shared heating sources, less driving and overall better community management.

The community is already using a system which promotes the concepts of CEM. The warm water well had been used to keep the water system heated, but because of lack of expertise on how to operate it, over the years, it has been mothballed. The community could use its warm water well more and put the heat pumps back to work and expand the network of buildings that are connected to the system. There was support for this idea, and for government assisting if necessary to get this system working again.

The town is interested in energy audits, and will promote greater energy efficiency in municipal affairs. There is a new school being built in the next few years and participants see this as a real opportunity for principles of CEM to be utilized.

7.2 Green Power Fund

There was not a general consensus on the need for a GPF. Some felt that they couldn't support a GPF without first seeing a green power project and understanding how exactly the fund would be used. Others felt that Green Power should be used no matter what and it didn't really matter whether it was paid for by a fund or by our taxes. It was suggested that the government could promote independent green power producers through tax benefits and red tape reduction. Independent green power producers should be allowed to sell their surplus back into the grid. The question of accountability and fund management arose:

⇒ *"I would only want to contribute to a Green Power Fund, if I could trust that the fund would be used to support green power and nothing else."*

Something should be done with the community's most obvious green power source, the Mayo dam. It is currently spilling surplus water. Participants felt they know very well how to conserve and which green power sources work -- they just need the political will to make green power work, not a fund. Sure it costs something to build green power projects initially, but once they are built they cost very little to operate. The plant at Mayo should be fully used.

⇒ *"We've got green power going to waste up the road here."*

7.3 Rate Stabilization

The community agreed that for now, RSF is a great idea, but it's a short-term solution.

⇒ *"A Rate Stabilization Fund is just a band-aid solution. There must be some other way to get stable rates."*

The government should look into the future and do some planning based on long-term goals. Others were simply glad of any relief in their bills:

⇒ *" We wouldn't have the problems that we have today, if there had been better planning in the past".*

⇒ *"We'll take what we're given. At least it's better than going up and down like a yo-yo."*

Equalization payments were a focus of discussion and some felt that each community should have to pay what it costs in their community for power. If you want to live in Old Crow, then go pay the power rates there. People in Mayo should get to pay less for their power. Participants believed that if there was going to be RSF, then everyone should benefit. It's just as hard for commercial customers to pay their bills as it is for residential customers.

⇒ *"The people in Mayo who have electric furnaces were encouraged by the government to have those furnaces, so they shouldn't be penalized now."*

At the same time there needs to be continued conservation measures and education on how to use less power. There should be financial incentives so people reduce consumption. Large families shouldn't have to bear the brunt of this rate increase and so, an RSF should apply to everyone equally.

7.4 Risk Management

There was a unanimous view that new users should pay for their own power or at least enter into a binding agreement to share costs and benefits of building new infrastructure, with government.

⇒ *"The government is very good at promoting big business to come in, but then when they leave, who gets stuck with the cost? Us! We don't need it. The grid should be extended to encourage economic development, but the cost of the extension should be shared with the mining companies and we should really look at the future viability of the extension, after a mine closes."*

A few participants promoted the idea of using local micro-hydro, where possible, to reduce risk.

⇒ *"There's water running by every community in the Yukon, we should use it"*

7.5 Other

There is also some frustration that Mayo is not getting cheaper rates despite their proximity to a 'free' power supply.

⇒ *"Don't like the fact that when Mayo got connected into the grid, Mayo residents had to subsidize the whole of the Yukon. Mayo residents were originally told that once the Mayo facility was paid off that Mayo would get cheaper rates."*

8. Keno

The community meeting was held on April 16, 1998.

8.1 Community Energy Management

People were in general agreement that CEM is a great idea. However, they've found it difficult to access government money and do community planning in a town with no municipal status. Lower level governments shouldn't have to convince those that fund them that energy efficiency is a good idea. There is a good opportunity to make our old buildings a lot more energy efficient.

Everyone was agreed that wind, small scale hydro and solar might all be possible energy sources for Keno, but there is no market to make them economically viable.

8.2 Green Power Fund

There was vast support for the idea of promoting greater green power use. It was thought that perhaps the simplest way to make green power viable would be if we paid the full cost of our power. Then green power wouldn't cost more than diesel generated power.

⇒ *"Environmental and other costs are real, and someone will have to pay for them at some point, so they need to be factored into the cost of diesel energy."*

People were very interested and supportive of the Green Power Fund idea, and although there were concerns about accountability and fund management people felt they could contribute to the fund.

⇒ *"I would contribute personally to the fund if I was sure I could trust the fund's management. The only time I would trust the government to manage a fund would be if it put the money in my own bank account." The more public control over the fund, the better it will be. Public control could be through a board, or something that is at arm's length from government."*

There were still many unanswered questions about what the fund could do.

⇒ *"If the government had a definite green power project planned, then we would feel better about paying into a Green Power Fund".*

It was wholly agreed that green power is the way of the future, diesel and other fossil fuels will run out. The public is way ahead of the government on green power and it should do far more work in this area. Alternative power, that doesn't have fuel costs, will provide for a more stable power regime because it would not have variable fuel costs. Local, alternative power sources also mitigate the effect of line losses. Contributions to the fund should be mandatory, otherwise the fund would not be big enough.

8.3 Rate Stabilization

People in Keno were frustrated that there was no long-term plan on how to stabilize rates in the Yukon.

⇒ *"I would like to have a stable bill, but the Rate Stabilization Fund will not solve the problem; it is another band-aid solution. Rate relief is reacting to crisis and it doesn't make sense. We need proactive, long term planning."*

Accountability and fund management came up as concerns. There was general distrust of government's ability to manage the fund fairly, and fear that another level of bureaucracy would be created that would add costs but not value.

If there were an RSF, commercial and industrial consumers should not benefit from it, only non-profit community groups and people on fixed incomes should benefit from a Rate Stabilization Fund. As well, people who try to save energy should get a bonus. People who don't conserve energy, or who are on electric heat shouldn't get a break. I like the cap on the rate relief because otherwise there is no incentive to save energy.

8.4 Risk Management

There was no question in anyone's mind that any new mines that request a new power supply and infrastructure should pay for their own power.

⇒ *"The mines are mining the government, not the ground."*

If mining companies need government help to get started they could get a tax break. If they need the extra break from government to get started, then perhaps the mines aren't economic in the first place.

Participants felt there should be more efficient, smaller power plants around the territory located close to their customers. Then YEC/YECL could shut down plants when they are no longer needed, reducing the overhead costs to be borne by the remaining consumers.

Participants were also frustrated at the large outstanding power bill that Anvil Range owes. They suggested that mining companies should have to pay a bond to cover their power costs in

case they shut down suddenly. This should be similar to the money they have to set aside for reclamation costs.

The government should encourage new industrial power users to use alternate power sources.

8.5 Other

The community would like a fish ladder put in at the Mayo dam so that the fish could come back up to Keno. Also, as a further supply option, the output of the Mayo dam could be increased and Dawson connected to it. The community would like to be able to pay power bills locally (in Keno) again.

9. Carmacks

The community meeting was held on April 16, 1998 and included representatives from the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and the Village Council

9.1 Community Energy Management

It was noted by a number of folks in the community that the problem in Carmacks is that the river splits the community in half and makes it difficult to implement CEM concepts. As well, density is a problem and there is no core community. Even if CEM were to be implemented, who would collect the bills on how much power people use? It was felt by some and not disputed by others that local management of energy supply would not work because people do not have the basic level of education to be successfully trained to do the management.

9.2 Green Power Fund

There was general enthusiasm for a Green Power Fund. However, some felt a GPF would be hard to implement, and that people won't support Green Power in the long term if it involves paying more money. The fund should be set up so that the Utilities should have to contribute to it as well. The Utilities should have to contribute more than the ratepayers do. It was agreed that if there was a fund contribution to it must be mandatory, or else people will not pay it. However, people in financial need should not have to pay into the fund.

9.3 Rate Stabilization Fund and Rate Relief

People weren't excited about the RSF one way or the other. If there was a fund it should be targeted only to those who need the financial assistance. Most people do not need this kind of financial assistance. Besides, there is very low power consumption in Carmacks. Some felt rate stabilization should be for those in financial need.

⇒ *"Big users should be big payers."*

9.4 Risk Management

While there was not general agreement on this, one participant claimed "*there was no problem with an increase in my power bill if it means Faro can keep operating (even if the increase in the power rate is 20%). Faro workers contribute a lot to the economy of the Yukon.*" All future mines should put down payment for energy bills. There has been poor energy planning in the

past for dealing with situations when the mine is not operating and this needs to be remedied with a better plan for the future.

9.5 Supply Options

Micro hydro production is an option for this community and the FN may consider this eventually. With the option of selling power to the grid, the FN would see this as economic development opportunity. The coal reserves at Braeburn could be explored in a joint agreement with Archer Cathro and be used as further supply option. There are other viable supply options for this community such as solar power. There is much availability of wood in this area and it is being used to heat homes.

10. Faro

The community meeting was held on April 20, 1998 and included the Town Council.

10.1 Community Energy Management

Participants were interested in the ideas of CEM. Many houses in Faro have poor insulation and would be more energy efficient if they were retrofitted to take full advantage of energy efficiency design and technology. Energy conservation education and energy technology education (e.g. what energy efficiency technology is available and how it can be accessed) would help people in Faro improve energy efficiency.

Participants were interested in disseminating more information to the community about the relationship between water and energy because a big cost to the municipality is pumping water. A bus service might work in Faro, especially for people who go on shopping trips to Whitehorse.

10.2 Green Power Fund

Green Power and a GPF were popular items and participants were very enthusiastic about green power and about a fund.

⇒ *"We may be one of the areas of the world that would really benefit from a Green Power Fund."*

Without getting specific, on principle alone, people were offering to pay a monthly fee into a Green Power Fund and would like the fund to go to research and development of energy technology. People agreed that money from a GPF could go outside to fund energy technology since new energy technology can help to increase energy conservation and to make green power sources more viable.

Education that promotes the value of green energy and new technology may help make a Green Power Fund successful. People will be more likely to pay into a Green Power Fund if they know exactly how the money will be used. New technologies, and proven renewable energy technologies, should be demonstrated in public places and at public events, in order to raise people's awareness of their potential. People felt that all Yukoners should contribute to a Green Power Fund so that it is a big enough fund to be useful. It should be mandatory.

⇒ *"If it's a reasonable amount, then people won't complain too much."*

10.3 Rate Stabilization Fund and Rate Relief

Participants pointed out that a Rate Stabilization Program could be designed similarly to the Rate Relief Fund in that, over a certain power usage, the rate stabilization would no longer apply. This would help to encourage conservation. However this fund does not strike us as a long-term solution. Economic diversity would help provide a long-term solution to rate stabilization.

⇒ *"I support the idea of rate stabilization, a 9% increase in my power bill may be possible for me to pay, but 16% "would wipe me out... I'd have to move".*

Participants felt the government should not use the diesel contingency fund to start a Rate Stabilization Fund because we may need the DCF if the Faro mine comes back up and if there is another drought. It was thought that both residential and commercial users should benefit from a Rate Stabilization Fund. The fund will have to be maximized over both classes. If the commercial class does not benefit from a Rate Stabilization Fund, than it will pass its extra costs on to the residential sector anyway.

Incentives for people to use less electricity were a popular idea. Give people incentives to reduce their consumption. For example, if they reduce their consumption from a base level (for example, their 5 year average consumption) by a certain percentage, they could be allowed to pay a certain percentage less than the 9% increase that everyone else has to pay. This could take the form of a conservation credit on their power bill. There needs to be additional incentives to help get people off electrically heating their homes. Have 800 kWh as the average to work from on this, rather than 1000 kWh. Everyone agreed that at the same time there needs to be education programs helping people understand how they use energy and where they can use less.

10.4 Risk Management

It was agreed that government should no longer try to lure investment by splurging on extravagant infrastructure. The private sector should pay for its new power supply and infrastructure. Industry should be able to take care of itself, without government support.

⇒ *"Make industry pay its way, period. This would not be a popular idea in Faro, but the reality is that the mine is not viable."*

⇒ *"They [government-subsidized mining companies] stay alive by parasitizing' the government."*

10.5 Supply Options Planning

It is imperative that communities and major electricity consumers should be able to participate in supply planning with project proponents. The environmental impacts of new power supplies have to be taken into consideration. Sustainability of the power source and sustainability of the environment should be key considerations when evaluating new power sources as well the full cost of diesel generation must be taken into consideration.

⇒ *"If more people were using alternatives to diesel, then the alternatives would cost less."*

People also liked the idea of a demand meter to adjust costs to the time of day.

⇒ *"They should be installed, it's a worthwhile investment."*

11. Teslin

The community meeting was held on April 22, 1998 and included the First Nation and the Village.

11.1 Community Energy Management

People responded well to the idea of CEM and suggested that, to further incorporate ideas of collective planning whenever a building permit is issued, information about CEM should be included.

11.2 Green Power Fund

There was support for the idea that there be a fund in place to encourage the trend towards more environmentally sustainable energy use. It was felt that industry should be major contributors to the GPF because they are the ones with the most potential to harm the environment. There was concern that right now there are too many questions about what the fund is and how it will be used. People need incentives to conserve energy and competitive prices may be one way. It was agreed that government should not be involved in managing the fund. Administration of the fund should not be a major drain on its resources.

11.3 Rate Stabilization

The current Cabinet Commission on Energy proposal is not a long-term strategy to combat fluctuating rates. This is not a rate stabilization plan. By not having a long term plan in place we may be doing more harm by not considering all options and working out the best use of $9 million for the most number of people. Since the RSF is being touted as a four-year plan, what happens in year five, will there be stable rates? Government needs to give more careful thought as to how this plan will unfold.

There was disagreement in the community as to who should benefit from the fund. Some felt that only those on a fixed income should benefit and everyone else should pay the increases because there needs to be a move towards paying the true cost of power. Others felt that all customers should benefit equally from the fund because the power increases would be passed on to customers anyway. While these people do want to see everyone get a piece of the RSF, they did agree there should be a different formula and not everyone gets the same amount of bill relief.

11.4 Risk Management

In the future, mines and other industrial users should be responsible for developing their own power source. It was agreed that economic development should not be used as an excuse for why companies get huge subsidies from government to start their operations:

⇒ ***"If they can't raise all the capital needed to get started without government assistance, then perhaps they have a marginal operation to begin with."***

11.5 Supply Options Planning

The Teslin Tlingit Council would like to work towards energy self sufficiency for their community and sell any excess power to the grid. They had concern that the current regulations determining sales to the grid are very restrictive and would stand in the way of communities or First Nations becoming Independent Power Producers themselves. By taking control of their own power production they will be able to provide affordable power to people within 5 years.

⇒ *"We're consuming unaffordable energy right now."*

12. Whitehorse

The public meeting was held on April 23, 1998. There was also a meeting with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation.

12.1 Community Energy Management

The participants at the Whitehorse public meeting were more interested in taking about other energy issues and when it came time to discuss CEM time had run out. One comment which was that "*Whitehorse is poorly designed for energy management because it is too spread out.*" It is not efficient in a jurisdiction this small to have two competing utilities.

12.2 Green Power Fund

There was general support for a green power initiative but rather than using a subsidy or having a GPF, it would be better to look at the long-term, true cost (including the environmental and social costs) of all power sources. Then maybe green power would be seen to be less expensive than traditional sources. A Green Power *Rate*, as opposed to a Green Power Fund, would make more sense. The rate could be a voluntary option for people:

⇒ *"If we know what the true cost is then we can make wise choices."*

The government should make choosing green power supply options a coherent, long-term policy goal and tax dollars should be assigned. Green power supplies tend to be local and renewable so it would increase the Yukon's energy independence. Accountability is a big concern. A Green Power Fund would have to be watched to make sure that it is not used as a slush fund.

12.3 Rate Stabilization

Participants did not have overwhelming support for a Rate Stabilization Fund, but there was support for rate stability. The question of accountability was again raised:

⇒ *"Are there ways to ensure that a Rate Stabilization Fund would not be used for anything other than stabilizing residential and commercial customers' rates? Is there any way to protect the fund? Where will the utility get the money to do its regular operation and maintenance (or any extra developments) if rates are stabilized? When do we start seeing pay backs to the consumers? When will our rates come down again?"*

The group felt that not enough thought, or alternative options had been presented as a way to stabilize rates.

⇒ *"If it is predicted that the RSF will cost approximately 9 million dollars in its current incarnation how do we know that the money couldn't be better used to help people become more energy efficient, or at least we'd like to see that this is the best use of the money, what are the options?"*

Establishing a Rate Stabilization Fund is quite risky and could cost consumers a lot, especially if the economic climate does not get better and there is no obvious way to replenish the funds. Someone would have to constantly review how much this fund is actually costing taxpayers. Having staggered or seasonal rates should be looked at, so that customers pay more in the winter when supply is down and less in the summer when the supply is plentiful.

Industrial customers should also have winter and summer rates and these rates should be put in place now, before another industrial customer comes into the territory. Another way to mitigate the demand/supply imbalance it was recommended that dual fuel is another way to decrease winter use and increase summer use of hydro-electricity. Using whatever method of heating your home that makes the most sense for the season is a way of life that we need to adopt.

12.4 Risk Management

Industry must now play a role in sharing the risk of new supply development and infrastructure construction. They should have to put in a deposit for new power supply and infrastructure. But if industry has to supply all of its own power then it may not choose to come into the Yukon. Government should not help industry in the same way it has in the past.

⇒ *"Our experience has shown us that we just get burned by offering industry something for nothing."*

The more energy we free up through energy efficiency then the less risk there will be. Industry could be offered a portable power supply rather than a huge grid extension.

⇒ *"The decision-making power for accepting risk should be given to the taxpayers that own the system."*

12.5 Supply Options Planning

When considering new supply options and the impact on the economy someone pointed out that:

⇒ *"The net economic impact of petroleum products is about 55 cents for every dollar we spend. That means that 45 cents goes outside of the Yukon. For home conservation about $2.21 ends up in the Yukon economy for every dollar spent. For solar energy it's $2.12, and for wind it's $2.38. However, wind, micro hydro and other sources (including energy efficiency) cannot be used as primary sources. Taken together, they can supplement each other and more traditional sources."*

Wood could be a good choice because of the abundance of fire-killed wood in the Yukon, and collecting the wood could create jobs. Yet a lot of fuel and expense goes into collecting wood -- jobs might be created but no money saved. It should be clear what the public policy objectives are before making any decisions.

The participants were clear that 'efficiency' should always been considered a supply option. In terms of energy conservation you are asking the consumer to pay twice -- once to pay for the retrofits and new appliances and once again for the increase in costs, due to the decrease in

energy demand. So the utility should be able to share the savings of energy efficiency so that they have more of an incentive to help us to conserve. If energy conservation results in the utility being able to use less diesel or avoid building a new power plant, than that would be an incentive for them to help us to conserve.

12.6 Energy Conservation

There was consensus that the key priority should be the decrease of energy demand.

⇒ *"First and foremost we should be focusing on energy conservation. People should pay the true cost of their power, only then will people have the incentive to save energy."*

We should have low interest loans and other incentives to help people conserve energy. Energy efficiency is our biggest supply option.

⇒ *"Anything we can do to increase energy efficiency is positive and it also has a positive effect in minimizing our production of Green House Gases. CO_2 reduction should be part of our policy goals - given that we signed the Kyoto agreement."*

13. Haines Junction

The community meeting was held on April 29, 1998 and included representatives from the Champagne Aishihik First Nation and the Town Council.

13.1 Community Energy Management

In the Champagne and Aishihik village there is a district heating plant powered by wood chips. There are divergent views in the community on how effective the plant is or whether it is able to meet the demand of the consumers it serves. It is widely agreed that the wood source for the plant is inexhaustible, lots of communities have fire-killed wood nearby. Some of the problems the FN has encountered in trying to keep the plant open and operational, are mainly staffing issues, keeping the plant viable while trying to pay decent wages to employees. There are also technical, operational questions which needed to be looked at by an engineer. CAFN was looking into retaining one to study the plant and make recommendations on it.

The question of who pays how much for their heat when it comes from a central source was raised. It was recognized that if everyone paid the same, it would create dissent. Those who conserve heat might resent those who waste it. It was agreed that there needs to be work done on understanding the best way to utilize the current district heating plant. How to make it work, and how to make it work for more homes?

Those in Haines Junction felt that Mayo would be an ideal community for testing CEM. They could run a pilot study, possibly a joint venture with the BC government, to produce hydrogen gas for power generation using the clean, plentiful power surpluses from their dam. It is a waste not to use the power that dam can generate. Most people felt that connecting Mayo to other communities makes sense or should at least be seriously looked at as an option.

Some of the CEM measures they've tried in Haines Junction don't work, like energy efficient light bulbs. Participants agreed that energy audits are needed.

13.2 Green Power Fund

Virtually everyone consulted agreed that a big problem with funds is how they are managed and therefore they could not support the creation of a GPF.

⇒ *"Accountability would be a problem. Subsidized projects do not work. Alternative energy projects, which are subsidized, would not be managed well. "*

It was agreed by those in favour of generating more 'green' energy, as well as by those who simply wanted the market to be allowed to work without government intervention, that if consumers had to pay the real cost of power, then green power would be able to compete and would become a viable option.

⇒ *"Are there mechanisms/incentives for a private company to set up a windmill? If there were incentives, it would happen. That is the only way to get green power."*

One recommendation was that the government should get at the problem more directly than using a GPF, for example charge a one per cent carbon tax in the territory. This would create incentives for higher cost green alternatives to diesel generation. Money would go into general revenue. Don't set up a fund. Make the playing field more level for green power options. While there wasn't a general consensus supporting the carbon tax, creating a level playing field, without government subsidies, was appealing to most.

It was also noted that we in the Yukon are 30,000 people. Our environmental impacts are relatively negligible. A GPF isn't really necessary. We should simply try to find the cheapest way to generate power. This view was not widely supported and as someone pointed out there must be promotion of the long-term benefits of alternative power.

Someone noted that as long as contributions to the fund were optional, no one would disagree with it. Yet if there were to be strict accountability guidelines, there were a few participants who would be willing to contribute monthly fees, but contributions should be mandatory across the board otherwise too many people would opt out. There was some interest in further exploring the notion of establishing an alternative energy corporation.

13.3 Rate Stabilization

There was no consensus on whether there is a need to stabilize rates.

⇒ *"Peaks and valleys on rates are OK, we don't need to stabilize rates."*

Then there were those who wanted certainty in their rates not massive fluctuations.

⇒ *"We need to get away from the "yo-yo" effect in power rates to help with my monthly budget."*

At 1000 kWh/month the RSF would save $5/month, a negligible amount for most consumers.

If there was an RSF it was not agreed that residential customers should benefit the most. There was dissension from those who believed that everyone should be equally eligible for RSF, including municipalities and the commercial sector. Make distribution of the RSF fair to all customers.

There was agreement that there should be no rate relief along with an RSF because those in financial need will be covered by the RSF. Adding rate relief on top is *"turning the utility into a social welfare function. I disagree with that."* Others wanted no additional rate relief because relief undermines energy conservation.

⇒ *"We don't subsidize milk, why energy, especially when it works against the goal of conservation? If people paid the true costs of power, there would be more incentive to conserve."*

If consumers are not paying the full cost of power, there is no incentive to use power efficiently. Everyone has the option of using less to reduce their own costs. Therefore everyone should pay the true cost of power. While there were strong views in favour of this position, not everyone agreed that paying true cost of power would be acceptable to consumers.

When asked how the proposed fund should be started, people mentioned how frustrated they were that Anvil Range was allowed to build up such a big debt. They felt the government should not count on that money being collected, and certainly shouldn't plan on using it to establish any part of this fund. There was also general frustration about the lack of a long-term plan for the RSF. It was widely felt that if the RSF goes ahead the government must immediately develop a long-term strategy.

One person felt YEC should sell off some assets to reduce costs now that the mine has closed and not as much power is needed. No one felt they completely understood how the Yukon Utilities Board works. The YUB should be regulating but it is part of the government. Government subsidizes some users, yet controls the rates. Rates are a YUB question. Why is government involved?

13.4 Risk

There was agreement that the government has no place putting money into energy infrastructure for future mines or other big industrial customers.

13.5 Energy Conservation

One person said s/he would have liked to see more people at the meeting. The issues being discussed affect everyone, and they are big, complex issues that everyone should have input on. It was agreed that people have no incentive to save or conserve right now because power is too cheap.

⇒ *"Why incur the costs of becoming more efficient if there is not enough of a return? Oil and power are relatively cheap."*

There is also an absence of practical information on how to conserve. Participants said they wanted to see the pay offs over 10 years of, for example, buying more efficient appliances. People have difficulty making the decision to spend money now on things that will save money later. They also felt that REMP/CEMP should allow you to make renovations bit by bit, slowly over a long time. This would make it more affordable. As for getting Utilities to buy into demand side management initiatives there is no incentive for them to participate or encourage energy conservation.

⇒ *" They want to sell more power to make profits for shareholders"*

The government needs to practice conservation measures as well throughout all departments and offices. Some embrace conservation practices; others seem unconcerned and disinterested in energy conservation at a time when Yukon has surplus hydro.

Despite the problems and cost in installing them, participants felt that demand meters are a great idea. As well there should be a varying rate schedule to avoid peaking and to encourage people to use power in off peak hours.

14. Destruction Bay

The community meeting was held on May 14, 1998.

14.1 Community Energy Management

The community felt that CEM principles could be implemented by using the diesel generator to its full potential by connecting it to a waste heat system to serve buildings in the community.

⇒ *"There's a lot more we can do here. Is it possible to connect it (waste heat system) to houses in the subdivision?"*

14.2 Green Power Fund

Participants supported the GPF and the idea of contributing to it as individuals. As long as there was a way to ensure accountability, people had no difficulty in having the government manage the fund. Perhaps the Department of Finance could manage the fund.

⇒ *"We need to promote alternate sources of power and get away from diesel. I'd be willing to pay an extra $5 or $10 per month Green Power, but I want to see where my money's going and commitments to pay should be flexible.*

For setting priorities for any redistribution of the existing funds to the GPF, people felt that all funds, including the RSF, rate relief, diesel contingency fund and others should be examined to see how money could be best used before any decisions about redirecting the funds is made.

14.3 Rate Stabilization

People said rate stability was important to them, but they were unsure about how this fund was set up. People had many questions about what was proposed in this plan and wanted these questions resolved before there was total endorsement, but in the end a 9% rate increase sounded better than a 16% increase.

The group felt that everyone but industry should benefit from this fund, and mainly residential customers should benefit from it. There was general agreement that the RSF should replace.and not duplicate the rate relief program. It was felt that the government should continue to subsidize residential customers especially rural residents because they're faced with higher living costs. There was no support for targeted rate relief:

⇒ *"I don't support rate relief being targeted to those in financial need it sounds too expensive to administrate."*

14.4 Risk Management

When asked who should be responsible for new power supply and infrastructure, there was unanimous agreement that the user should pay. Diesel should only be used as a risk management option if it's used to full potential, e.g. District Heating or cogeneration. Government should no longer be involved in being the sole risk absorber when it comes to building new power supplies, however, risk might be shared in combination with others.

14.5 Other

People felt strongly that coal should not even be considered when examining supply options.

⇒ *"We want to see renewable energy supplies developed – not coal."*

Energy conservation was of interest to people. They felt government needs to take the lead on providing more public education about energy conservation. Finally, the community is interested in local supplies of power and suggested the potential hydro site at the Duke River be reassessed.

15. Burwash Landing: Kluane First Nation

The community meeting was held as part of discussions with Kluane First Nation on May 19, 1998.

15.1 Community Energy Management

District Heating makes sense in Burwash Landing. The Kluane First Nation is planning to install a wood chip boiler soon to heat several buildings. The new firehall can be easily connected to this system, which would displace the need for expensive heating oil. It would also produce local jobs which are badly needed in our community. The Duke River hydro site should be further investigated. More energy information might help but would be more effective if someone visited everyone at home.

15.2 Green Power Fund

There was support for the idea of a GPF because, people said, *"renewable energy sources are the future".*

15.3 Rate Stabilization

People were supportive of government's initiatives to stabilize rates and attempting to make them affordable. Both residential customers and small business should benefit from the fund.

15.4 Rate Relief Options

Participants felt that if the RSF was in place, there shouldn't be a need for continued rate relief.

⇒ *"We don't believe that consumers should pay the true cost of power. All consumers should share the benefits of the RSF."*

15.5 Risk Management

On risk management and the question of who should absorb the risk, there was no question that industrial customers, if it's built for them, should pay for new power supply and infrastructure.

15.6 Other

As a final comment, people wanted it noted that any new power supply options should not include coal, they want to stay with renewable energy sources.

16. Beaver Creek: White River First Nation

The community meeting was held on May 20, 1998 as part of the meeting with the White River First Nation

16.1 Community Energy Management

The White River First Nation is very interested in developing a CEM project using waste heat from the diesel generator. There is a 1985 study on the issue and its being recirculated. More education is needed if CEM is going to work in this community or in others.

⇒ *"Some of the conservation tips we've heard today are great! We should know more about these things."*

16.2 Green Power Fund

Participants were very enthusiastic about a GPF and contributed some very specific suggestions on how it should work:

⇒ *"There should be a green power fund, it's time we gave protection of our environment and energy conservation priority. The fund should be administered by YTG and be accountable in the Yukon Legislature. To start the fund money should be redirected from rate relief programs. Wind, wood, hydro, alternatives, but not coal when choosing new energy supply options."*

16.3 Rate Stabilization

People were in favour of stabilizing rates and the notion of having a fund to do it. They felt that all residential customers and maybe some small business customers should benefit from the fund, however industrial customers should not benefit from the fund. They were confident that so far as they understood the RSF it would be adequate to deal with current energy rates. Rate Relief in addition to an RSF is not necessary. Participants were interested in having government continuing to subsidize bills in some way yet they didn't like the idea of targeted rate relief and felt that if there were subsidies they should be universal.

16.4 Risk Management

Participants agreed that industrial customers must pay for their own energy needs.

17. Conclusion

Participants took a lively interest in the issues presented during the community tour. It is clear that Yukon people do care very much about how their power is generated, how much it costs, and how planning for the future should take place. There is still confusion over the difference between rate stabilization and rate relief, and how energy costs are calculated generally. This in turn leads to a wide variety of positions on the merits of establishing a Green Power Fund or a Rate Stabilization Fund.

While participants did not want to pay an unreasonable amount for power, there was general recognition that paying too little would also be undesirable because consumers would have no incentive to conserve. Depending on the community, some participants wanted to pay the "actual" cost of power -- in communities served by the Whitehorse-Aishihik-Faro grid or the Mayo grid, this would lead to lower rates. In all other communities, however, rates would climb significantly.

There was generally agreed that rate subsidies -- whether in the form of rate stabilization, equalization or rate relief -- should be universally applied. Subsidies could be linked to consumption, but should not be linked to income or other indicators of economic well being. As well, there was general agreement that power consumers should not be paying for incentives to attract new industries onto the grid; any incentives offered by the government should come from other sources.

Participants shared a common concern over the debt incurred by the Anvil Range mine. People do not want to see *any* consumer ever allowed to run up such a large debt again, since it is the remaining consumers who must cover the loss. There was also general concern about government involvement with the proposed Green Power and the Rate Stabilization Funds. Many fear that if the funds are not open and accountable to consumers they will be used for other purposes or poorly managed.

In many meetings, community-specific suggestions for Green Power sources and Community Energy Management opportunities were raised. These should be brought to the attention of the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Electrical Company Ltd. as well as the Cabinet Commission on Energy.

18. Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Community Energy Management: A community-based bottom-up approach to achieving community energy objectives through integrated planning.

Diesel Contingency Fund: A temporary fund set up in 1996 to offset extra diesel generation costs due to below-average water availability for the hydro system. When water levels are above average, diesel generation cost savings are transferred to the DCF.

Green Power: Clean, renewable power generated by harnessing the energy of renewable sources such as the sun, wind, flowing rivers, geothermal activity and biogas. Efficient technologies such as fuel cells can also be considered a form of Green Power because they emit minimal levels of pollution.

Independent Power Producer (IPP): A company which is not a regulated utility but generates electricity -- usually on a small scale -- for own use, to sell to another user, or to sell to a regulated utility.

Rate Relief: A short-term, government-financed approach to reducing the impact of a rate increase. Relief is paid directly to energy consumers, and shows up as a "rider" on power bills.

Rate Stabilization : A long term, ultimately self-financing mechanism to reduce rate shock when rates are adjusted to reflect adjustments in utility costs or revenue recovery.

Rate Stabilization Fund: Operates independently of utilities. Acts as buffer between cost charged to consumer and real cost of power used. Energy consumer sees only "stabilized" cost on bill, with difference between actual cost and "stabilized" cost paid by fund to utility.

Utility Consumers Group: Independent Yukon-based society which monitors activities of Yukon Utilities Board, YEC, YECL and government with respect to energy issues.

Yukon Utilities Board: A quasi-judicial board which is charged with responsibility for the regulation of public utilities in the Yukon pursuant to the Public Utilities Act.